



**Testimony  
Leo Paul  
First Selectman, Town of Litchfield  
Before the Finance Committee  
March 9, 2015**

Good afternoon. My name is Leo Paul, First Selectman of the Town of Litchfield. I am the Vice President of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) and I also serve on the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities.

I am here to testify in **opposition** to **Section 26 of SB-946**, which would require towns to pick up 100% of the costs of the Resident State Trooper program, undermining what is a valuable state-local partnership for delivering public safety services in a cost-effective manner.

The Resident State Trooper program has been in place for more than 60 years. Over the years, more and more small towns have chosen to utilize resident state troopers to provide greater public safety protection for their citizens.

In 2011, the state legislature *increased* from 70% to 100% the amount towns are required to reimburse the state for Resident State Trooper overtime costs. This shifted a considerable burden onto Connecticut's small towns at a time when state aid to municipalities has been largely flat funded and the cost of providing critical services, such as education, continues to increase. In addition, the fringe benefit rate that towns are required to pay for both regular pay and overtime pay has increased dramatically over the years.

Instead of addressing concerns regarding the costs of the program, SB-946 would increase the amount towns have to pay for the Resident State program. As a result, towns may decide to reduce the number of troopers they contract with or disband the program altogether, forcing the state to assume 100% of the costs associated with providing public safety services in the state's smaller communities. Under these circumstances, everyone loses.

The Resident State Trooper program - if local costs are reined in - is a win-win for both the state and local communities. We urge lawmakers to protect the viability of this program and encourage towns to regionalize programs and share services to increase efficiency and reduce costs. The Resident State Trooper program is consistent with these goals and lawmakers should strive to protect this state-local partnership.

Unfortunately, as drafted, SB-946 will effectively dismantle the Resident State Trooper program, jeopardizing public safety in our communities.